



**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
**U. S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, CENTRAL COMMAND**  
**7115 S. BOUNDARY BLVD**  
**MACDILL AFB, FL 33621-5101**

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
1650  
G-1

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U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, CENTRAL COMMAND POLICY LETTER 03-06

From: Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command  
To: Distribution List

Subj: AIR MEDAL POLICY

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 1650.1H

1. The following guidance is established to assist in the processing of Air Medals for all personnel involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) under this command. This policy letter provides additional/amplifying guidance to SECNAVINST 1650.1H and is to be used uniformly by all units under this command.

2. Eligibility Requirements. In adjudging the appropriate awards for the various members of a flight crew, the pilot responsible for flying the aircraft is sometimes eligible for a higher award than other members of the flight crew. However, in a two-seat aircraft where the pilot and crewmember constitute a team and function as an integral part of the weapons system, both would generally be eligible for the same award. A crewmember other than the pilot should not be precluded from receiving a higher award if circumstances so indicate. Each case will be considered on its own merits. The Air Medal may be awarded in two categories:

a. Air Medal Individual Award (AF) and Air Medal Individual Award with Combat Distinguishing Device (AH). Awarded to any person who distinguishes himself/herself by heroic/meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight operations while under flight orders. To be eligible for this award, actions are to be significantly beyond the normal standard for that community. When recommending this award, the command should consider all crewmembers involved in the same action. In the electronic endorsement, the Commanding Officer should make a statement regarding the consideration of the other crewmembers. Blocks 20 and 21 must be appropriately completed to ensure all personnel being recommended for the same action and/or award are boarded equitably.

(1) Device. A 5/16 inch gold Arabic numerals are worn to denote total number of individual awards of the Air Medal. Numerals are positioned to the wearer's right on the ribbon bar and suspension ribbon.

(2) Awarding Authority. The Awarding Authority of the AF has been delegated to the Commanding General of the forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Force. However, Awarding Authority for the AH is not sub-delegated and is retained by the Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command.

Subj: AIR MEDAL POLICY

(3) Amplification. The AF and AH are impact awards for heroic action or meritorious achievement, when the degree of the action or achievement rendered, although meritorious, is not sufficient to warrant the awarding of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

(4) Citation. The citation must not exceed the maximum characters allowed in the award link and must have the mandatory opening and closing sentences set forth in the reference. If recommending the Air Medal with Combat "V", the last sentence will be, "The Combat Distinguishing Device is authorized."

(5) Summary of Action. Paragraph format; Recommendations for the Air Medal and Combat Distinguishing Device (AH) must include the statement, "Service member receiving imminent danger pay (IDP)" or "not eligible for IDP" in the first paragraph of the summary of action (SOA). The last sentence will be, "The Combat Distinguishing Device is authorized." The SOA must be detailed and include all pertinent information to support the AF or AH medal. If recommending the AH, be specific in how the aircraft encountered enemy opposition.

b. Air Medal Strike/Flight Award (AS). Awarded to any person who distinguishes himself/herself by meritorious achievement while participating in sustained aerial flight operations under flight orders. Bronze numerals are worn to denote total number of Strike/Flight Awards.

(1) Definitions

(a) Strike. Those sorties that deliver ordnance against the enemy; insert or extract assault personnel; or engage in search and rescue (SAR) operations that encounter enemy opposition.

(b) Flight. Those sorties that deliver ordnance against the enemy; insert or extract assault personnel; or engage in SAR operations that encounter no enemy opposition.

(c) Direct Combat Support (DCS) Mission. Those missions that include:

1 Transportation of personnel and cargo between Forward Operating Bases or Landing Zones.

2 Ferry flights originating within Iraq/Afghanistan.

3 Convoy escort that encounters no enemy opposition and in which no ordnance is delivered.

4 Reconnaissance flights.

Subj: AIR MEDAL POLICY

(d) No Air Medal Points Awarded. The following flights will not accrue credit in the calculation of Air Medal points.

- 1 NATOPS checks
- 2 Instrument checks
- 3 Functional check flights
- 4 Flights between established airbases outside of Iraq/Afghanistan.

(2) Modifications. The SECNAVINST authorizes awarding authorities to deviate from the established criteria. As such, the following guidance is provided to allow DCS "missions" to be defined by a specific amount of time, according to the type of aircraft.

(a) Based on mission profiles and airframes, the following computations apply:

Rotary Wing Aircraft	1.5 hours = 1 Mission (.4 point)
F/A-18 and AV-8B Aircraft	1.2 hours = 1 Mission (.4 point)
KC-130 Aircraft	1.5 hours = 1 Mission (.4 point)

[These hours are exclusive of hours flown on strike and flight missions.]

(b) A DCS "Mission" will be assigned .4 point in the calculation of Air Medal points.

(3) Requirements. The award of the Air Medal on a Strike/Flight basis shall require 20 points.

- (a) 10 strikes (1 strike = 2 points), or
- (b) 20 flights (1 flight = 1 point), or
- (c) 50 missions (1 mission = .4 point), or
- (d) A combination of these, using the appropriate ratios, i.e.:

3 strikes	=	6 points
10 flights	=	10 points
10 missions	=	4 points
<u>*20 total points = 1 AS</u>		

\*NOTE: (Time (hours) flown on 'strikes' or 'flights' is not counted towards time flown on 'missions')

Subj: AIR MEDAL POLICY

(4) Special Provisions

(a) Only personnel under flight orders are eligible to receive the Strike/Flight award of the Air Medal. The Combat Distinguishing Device (Combat "V") may not be authorized for Strike/Flight Air Medals.

(b) The individual award of an Air Medal, or other personal decoration for a particular sortie, should not preclude that sortie from counting toward eligibility for a Strike/Flight award of the Air Medal.

(c) Officers in the grade of Colonel/Captain (USN) or above shall not be eligible for the award of the Air Medal on a Strike/Flight basis unless the sorties involved were actually required in the performance of their regular duties. Recommendations involving officers in this category, regardless of the current extent of delegated awarding authority, shall be forwarded via the chain of command to the Secretary of the Navy for approval.

(5) Awarding Authority. Awarding Authority of the AS has been delegated to the Commanding General of the forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Force.

(6) Amplification. The appropriate number of Strike/Flight points will be awarded for any OIF/OEF sortie engaged in combat, from take-off to landing. Commanding Officers must verify accuracy of points. Previous OIF/OEF Strike/Flight points will be continued.

(7) Citation. The citation must not exceed the maximum characters allowed in the award link and must have the mandatory opening and closing sentences for the award as shown in the reference.

(8) Summary of Action. The summary of action will include the following information.

(a) Previous Strike/Flight points carried over.

(b) Number of Flight missions.

(c) Number of Strike missions.

(d) Total number of hours flown on Direct Combat Support (DCS) Missions (this number excludes hours flown on Strike and Flight missions).

1 Total DCS Hours / Hours per mission = Missions

2 Missions x 0.4 points per mission = Points

Subj: AIR MEDAL POLICY

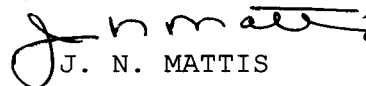
(e) Total number of tabulated points.

(f) Previous awarded Air Medal (Strike/Flight) (i.e., SNO was previously awarded the Air Medal (First through fourth Strike/Flight award)).

(g) Authorized Air Medal (Strike/Flight Award) (i.e., the Air Medal (Fifth Strike/Flight Award is authorized)).

(h) Total number of points carried forward.

3. This policy is effective on the date signed and is not retroactive.

  
J. N. MATTIS

Distribution: A